



# P.O.K. Protecting Our Kids



## How Can I Protect My Child From Internet Dangers? Tips For Smart Web Parents

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The key is to monitor your child's Internet activity. Make sure you and your child know what to watch out for on the Web. Remember, because of the anonymity offered by the Internet, people you meet online may not be who they claim to be. Encourage your children never to share personal information about themselves on the Internet. Smart Web parents can protect their kids by doing the following:

- n Keep the computer in a family room so that you can monitor their Internet use.
- n Talk to your children about the dangers of the Internet. Emphasize that dangerous pedophiles use the anonymity offered by the Web to lure child victims. Stress that the rules you set are to protect them, not to control them. Make sure your children understand they need to be careful online. Encourage your children to create screen names and e-mails that do not reveal their personal information (name, age, school, etc.). Children who understand the risks posed by the Internet are more likely to cooperate with their parents in safeguarding their Internet activities.
- n Install an operating system that makes you the administrator, for example, Windows XP or Mac OS X. Create a password that will allow only you to control the computer's Internet settings, online content, and software that can be installed. This is an important step in monitoring your child's online activities, even when you are away from the home. If you are unable to establish yourself as your computer's administrator after following the steps in the links above, then someone else has been designated as the administrator. If the administrator is your child, you can regain control of your computer through your child's user ID and password. Once you become the new administrator, you can control the Internet content and Web sites your child has access to. For more detailed information visit the D.A. website
- n Tell your children that you have the right to monitor their computer use and that if you suspect there is a problem, you will randomly monitor their Internet activities.
- n Do not allow your child to have multiple e-mail accounts or create accounts without your knowledge. You may insist that your children give you their e-mail and chat passwords. Internet accounts and primary screen names should be in your name.
- n Tell your children to let you know immediately if a stranger tries to contact them on the Web, whether through an Instant Message, chat room, or even an e-mail.
- n Go online with your kids and find out who they send Instant Messages to and/or chat with. Prohibit the use of private chat rooms as well as adult-oriented rooms. Make sure you know the identity of everyone on their contact and/or buddy lists.



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- n Make sure your child knows never to divulge personal information on the Internet, including his or her name, age, photos, gender, physical description, telephone number, address, etc. Internet predators look at personal profiles stored on the Internet to find their victims.
- n The federal government has enacted the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) to protect your child's privacy when he/she registers with certain Web sites.
- n Set rules as to what sites your children are allowed to visit and which ones they are not. Enforce these rules, and set time limits on their computer use.
- n Do not allow your children to chat (send Instant Messages) during homework-related computer time.
- n Become familiar with the Web browser your children use, and restrict the type of content (violence, sex, and language) that can be viewed.
- n Consider purchasing third-party filtering software such as Cyberpatrol or NetNanny. Most software electronics stores carry filtering software.